A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

S. *PAUL COVENT-GARDEN.*

On the late Day of

Fasting & Prayer.

NOVEMB. 13.

By *SIMON PATRICK*, D.D. Rector of the said Parish, and Chaplain in Ordinary to his MAJESTY.

IMPRIMATUR,

Nov. 23. 1678. *Guil. Jane*, R.P.D. *Hen. Epiſc. Lond. a Sacris Dom.*

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TO THE
Inhabitants
OF THE
PARISH of S. *Paul Covent-Garden.*

THis Sermon being Printed, meerly becauſe many of you have deſired it; I hope you intend it ſhall not loſe its Fruit, but be imprinted in your Memories, and on your Heart. It is plain, as becomes the Habit of a Mourner; but what it wants in Ornament, it makes up, I truſt, in honeſt affections, and ſubſtantial endeavours to do you good: and if it be received into honeſt and good hearts, may conduce much to your happineſs here and hereafter. I pray God it may; and beſeech you every day to commit the cuſtody of your ſelves, ſo ſeriouſly unto him in well-doing, that you may every one of you be

able to say boldly, *The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*: Nay, you may have that comfortable hope which S. *Paul* had, and say with him, 2 Tim. IV. 17, 18. *I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lyon*: *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me to his Heavenly Kingdom.* Amen.

Jeremiah XIV. 9. latter part.

Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name, leave us not.

THE occasion of our solemn meeting at this time is, an **Information that hath been given** (as we are told in the Proclamation which called us hither) **of an horrible design against the life of his Sacred Majesty**; which must needs have drawn along with it such fatal consequences, had it succeeded, as would have endangered **the subversion of the Protestant Religion, and Government of this Realm: Which God of his infinite mercy hath hitherto prevented, and it is to be hoped will prevent for the future.**

These Reasons have moved the Parliament to desire, and His Majesty to grant and appoint, that this day be set apart, **for the imploring the mercy and protection of almighty God to His Majesties Royal Person, and in him to all his loyal Subjects: and to pray that God would bring to light more and more all secret Machinations against his Majesty, and the whole Kingdom.**

For the obtaining these great blessings, we ought in the devoutest manner to lift up our hearts and our hands (as this Prophet speaks elsewhere) to God in the Heavens: Acknowledging indeed that we are a very sinful Generation, a people laden with iniquity, who deserve, if he should punish us according to our provocations, to be utterly abandon'd by him; but humbly beseeching him, of his infinite clemency to have patience with us and spare us; and not to cut us down as barren Trees that cumber the ground, but to try us, at least a while longer,

whether we will bring forth the fruit he justly expects from us. Which though we have often promised, and not performed, and thereby made our selvs the more obnoxious to his heavy displeasure; yet since he hath not taken the forfeitures we have made of his favour, but still continues it to us, nay, in a wonderful mannner defeats the attempts of those, who would subvert our Religion; we have incouragement to importune him in such words as these I have now read, and to say, though we have been false to thee and to our own vows, *Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy Name, leave us not.*

Which are part of an humble deprecation of Gods displeasure, which the Prophet *Jeremy* makes in the behalf of *Judah* and *Jerusalem:* And are the fittest I could think of, to put into your mouths at this time, for the averting of Gods Judgments from this poor Church and Kingdom.

The *Jews*, for whom the Prophet was so importunate in those dayes, languished under, and were in danger to be devoured by, a most miserable Famine: which in that Country was wont to come from want of Rain, as here, in this part of the world, from overmuch moisture. Thus the Chapter begins (as the words run in the Hebrew) *The word of the Lord, that came to* Jeremiah *concerning the restraints*, which were upon the clouds, that is, by the command of the Almighty; who detained their showers, and so brought a dearth upon the Land.

This dearth is described in a very dreadful manner, from thence to the *7th v.* But looks nothing so terribly, to my apprehension, as a *famine of the word of God would do*; which we may fear would have followed here in these Countreys, if God had permitted our Enemies to accomplish their designs against us. For they would have shut up the holy Scriptures from you, and laid a restraint upon that Heavenly Doctrine which hath so many years (to use the words of *Moses*, *Deut.* 32. 2.) *Dropt upon you as the rain, and distilled as the dew: as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass.*

Our unfruitfulness indeed under such sweet influences of Heaven, may bring upon us this sore punishment: For we must confess,

confeſs, as *Jeremy* doth in the 7*th v. That our iniquities teſtifie againſt us.* They are open and apparent; they accuſe us heavily, and demand judgment upon us; they plead for our condemnation and the ſevereſt executions: *For our back-ſlidings are many*, and we have ſinned againſt God moſt grievouſly. And therefore, unleſs he will be favourable to us, as the Prophet there ſpeaks, for his own *Namesſake*, we muſt look for nothing but utter deſtruction.

That is our only hope, as it was theirs. But alas! ſuch was the ſadneſs of their caſe, that they had too much reaſon to fear, he who was *the hope of Iſrael* (as it follows *v.*8.) *and the Saviour thereof in time of trouble*, would not regard them, nor take any farther care of them. For that's the meaning of thoſe queſtions; *why ſhouldeſt thou be as a ſtranger in the land, and as a wayfareing Man, who turneth aſide to tarry for a night*? That is; as one that minds not what becomes of us; no more than a man is concern'd for a place where he intends not to inhabit; but only to paſs thorough, in his way to ſome other Country. *Why ſhouldeſt thou be as a man aſtonied, as a mighty man that cannot ſave*? Or as ſome render it, *like one that is weary*, with his former labours and toils for the good of his neighbours; which he finds have been beſtowed to ſo little purpoſe, that he hath no incouragement to do any more to help them. God ſeemed, that is, to be reſolved to ſend them no more deliverance, but to abandon them to inevitable deſtruction; or matters were come to ſuch a paſs, that the Prophet feared he would ſoon be ſo reſolved: their behaviour towards him being ſo ungrateful, as it gave him juſt cauſe to be *like a ſtranger* among them, and to imploy his power no longer for their Salvation. Only this they could ſay that he was not yet departed; upon which the Prophet grounds ſome hope he might be prevailed withal to ſtay with them —*Yet, O Lord, thou art in the midſt of us*, &c. This was the only thing remaining, upon which they could build any comfortable expectations; and they were not without a great mixture of fear, that notwithſtanding theſe addreſſes to him, he might forſake them.

How like our condition is to theirs, I need not ſtay to tell

you; We have too much cauſe to fear leſt God, who is our only *Hope*, and hath been heretofore our *Saviour*, ſhould let us reap the fruit of our own doings, and interpoſe no farther for our deliverance. He ſhews us indeed what he is ready to do for us, if we were diſpoſed to receive his new offers of Salvation: But we have been ſo little the better for what he hath wrought for us, in a long ſeries of Wonders, that it will be no wonder if he reſolve now upon another courſe, and be, as the Prophet here ſpeaks, like a mighty man that cannot ſave; having wearied himſelf with unprofitable care and pains for our welfare.

But we ought not for all this, to caſt away all hope in him, ſince it is apparent by the unexpected diſcovery he hath made of the horrid deſigns of our Enemies againſt us, that he is ſtill in the midſt of us; nay is deſirous, if we be willing, to ſave us. And therefore the fears, and ſad apprehenſions we have, ſhould only keep us from preſuming too much, even upon this ſingular priviledge and incouragement; and excite us to cry the more paſſionately and devoutly, *O Lord, leave us not*; forſake us not, Good Lord, though we are unworthy thou ſhouldeſt ſtay with us.

In which humble ſuit that we may prevail with him, I ſhall endeavour,

1. Firſt, to make you ſenſible, what a priviledge; what a Glory and Security it is, to have God *in the midſt of us*: That ſo you may be awakened to uſe your beſt endeavours to keep him with us.

2. And you will be more excited to this, if I briefly ſhew you in the *Second* place, that this extraordinary preſence of God with the people, will not ſecure them from the ſevereſt puniſhments, if they be diſobedient to him; nor is any reaſon for their preſumption that he is immutably tyed to them. No,

3. It will be apparent that it ought rather to be expected he ſhould puniſh them, becauſe of his care of them (expreſſed by this phraſe,) and that he ſhould quite leave them, if they will not be amended by thoſe puniſhments, becauſe they are inſenſible of his care.

4. And

4. And how great a plague that is, I believe you will be sensible, though I say nothing of it. And therefore,

5. In the last place I shall direct you how to prevent it, by such prayers to God as may obtain the favour of his continued presence with us.

I.

The *First* of these will need no other illustration, but the explaining of these two Phrases in my Text; Thou art *in the midst of us*, and we are *called by thy Name*. By which we shall presently discern what a glory and security this was to *Israel*; and what, by a parity of Reason, we may now, upon the same account, make our boast of, above many other Nations. The explication of the latter depends upon the former; for therefore they were *called by his Name*, *i. e.* owned by him for his peculiar people, because he was *in the midst of them*. This alone then will require my pains to explain it. And there are *Six* expressions, which I have observed in the holy Scriptures, that testifie the extraordinary presence of God among that people, (who now were in danger to be deserted by him) and abundantly satisfie us in the meaning and propriety of this speech, that he was *in the midst* of them.

1. *First*, they are said to be a people *near unto the Lord*, Psal. 148. *ult.* He also *exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his Saints, even of the Children of* Israel, *a people near unto him*. Which signifies a particular affection he had for them; inclining him to use them in a more familiar manner, than he did any other people upon the face of the Earth. For the rest of the world were treated as strangers, while these had the honour to approach unto him as his companions and friends. And therefore,

2. As they are said to be near unto him, so he is said to be *nigh unto them*. Which is the reason of the former; and justly esteemed by *Moses* to be a priviledge wherein they excelled all mankind, *Deut.* IV. 7. *What Nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what Nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments, so righteous, as all this Law which I set before you this day?* The Psalmist you read in the place forementioned,

mentioned, speaks of his *exalting the horn of his people, and the praise of his Saints*; that is, making them a Nation praised, fam'd, and renowned throughout the World: And here you find what it was that made them so great and illustrious, *viz.* The gracious presence of God among them, ready to do any thing for them that they desired; as appeared in that admirable form of Government and Divine Service which he had already established in their Nation.

3. Gods nearness to them and theirs to him, was manifested in this, that *He dwelt among them*, Exod. XXIX. 45,46. *And I will dwell amongst the Children of* Israel, *and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God that brought them out of the Land of* Egypt, *that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God.* It was a considerable Testimony of their nearness to God, that *they had stood before him at mount* Horeb, and received the Law from his mouth: which moved *Moses* to charge them to preserve a special remembrance of this, as you may read at large in *Deut.* IV.10, 11,12. But though this was a most memorable, yet it was not the only, nor the greatest (because not the most lasting) token of their nearness to him. For, lest it should be thought that he was then only present among them, at that famous time and place; he was pleased to declare afterward that he would dwell among them, and settle his abode with them; that in all future successions, and whithersoever they went, they might be assured of the same Divine presence, which appeared to them at *Horeb.*

4. In order to which he commanded them to build him an House, called the *Sanctuary*, or holy place; that they might be the more sensible of his constant abode with them, *Exod.* XXV.8. *And let them build me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.* Accordingly he there gives directions how it should be built; and orders how it should be furnished, with a Table, and Dishes, and Spoons, and Candlestick and Snuffers, and abundance of other houshold-stuff: Whereof no reason can be given but this, that it might represent in the most familiar manner to the grossest souls in the Nation, that God dwelt, and, as it were, kept house among them.

5. And

5. And that it might be more apparent this was his Houſe, and that herein he dwelt among them; this Houſe was ſeated in *the midſt of their Camp*, (*Numb.* XI. 17. *v.* 3.) and there was alſo a glorious cloud covered it, whereby it was ſanctified to be his habitation, *Exod.* XXIX. 43. The pillar of the cloud and fire, that is, which had led them out of *Egypt*, and was the ſpecial token of his preſence with them, he there promiſes ſhould reſt upon this Houſe, and conſecrate it to himſelf. And accordingly you find that as ſoon as *Moſes* had finiſhed this habitation, and ſet it up, *A cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle:* So that *Moſes* was not able to enter into the place, *becauſe the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled it, Exod.* XL. 34, 37. On the outſide of the houſe, that is, there was a ſmoak; but within there was a moſt glorious brightneſs; which ſometime broke forth in an amazing ſplendor, as a viſible token of his preſence in the midſt of them. So you read in many places, which I cannot ſtand now to mention, that the *Glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud*; and *ſtood in the door of the Tabernacle*, and *appeared to all the congregation*; dazling their eyes, and frighting them, when they were in the greateſt tumults and rebellions againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*: For it lookt then like a conſuming fire, which they thought would preſently devour them.

Laſtly, Gods dwelling among them was ſo clearly demonſtrated, he was ſo nigh to them, and made himſelf ſo familiar with them, that he is ſaid to be ſeen *face to face among them.* So you read, *Numb.* XIV. 14. Where the people being in a mutiny againſt the only good men amongſt them, *The Glory of the Lord appeared in the Tabernacle*, and the Lord threatned to disinherit them, and had then done execution upon them; had not *Moſes* interpoſed for them, by this argument, that the people of *Canaan* would make an ill conſtruction of it, *For they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art ſeen face to face, and thy cloud ſtandeth over them*, &c. Read alſo *Deut.* V. 4. And when you have conſidered all this ſeriouſly, you will ſee there was reaſon to ſay that the *LORD was in the midſt of them*; and in an extraordinary

ary manner sensibly present to this people. They were above all others dear to him, and had the highest marks of his favour and love. None could more presume of his indulgent kindness to them, or be more assured of his tender and affectionate care, watching over them to preserve them: Unless it be our selves, who have a greater grace vouchsafed to us, and more illustrious demonstrations of his powerful presence with us, to bless protect and defend us, than the *Israelites*, though so much in his favour, could boast of.

We, whom he hath *Elected* to be his peculiar people, *called to be Saints*, and *sanctified*, excell them as much as they did other Nations. He hath *exalted our praise* far above theirs, who were heretofore so much renowned; and hath approached so nigh to us, and made us so near to himself, that we may glory in his holy Name, and say, in a far more noble sence than they could, that he hath spoken to us face to face. *For no man hath seen God at any time; but the only begotten Son, who is in the bosome of the Father, he hath declared him. And the Word was made flesh*, say the Apostles of our Religion, *and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father*, *Joh.* I. 14. 18. God shone into the very hearts of these holy men, *to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. IV. 6. And *what they saw and heard they have declared to us, that we might also have fellowship with them*; and (they protest that) *truly their fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ*, 1 Joh. I. 3. *Who is the image of the invisible God; and the brightness of his glory.* By whom God looks upon us and speaks to us, through our own flesh: for he dwells not now, as he did among them, in a Tabernacle made of Curtains and beasts Skins, or in a house of stone; but hath made our Nature his dwelling-place. The flesh of man, is become the Sanctuary of God, wherein he will dwell for ever. As our Lord hath assured us, by sending down from his holy place, the HOLY GHOST, the Spirit of glory upon us: whereby all Christians are *built together*, *for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, *Ephes.* II. 22. Who hath delivered

livered to us his Oracles in the holy Gospel; where such things are revealed unto us as the *Angels desire to look into*, 1 Pet. I. 12. For the *New Jerusalem*, of which we are Citizens, *came down from God out of Heaven*; and when it descended S. *John* heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, *Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God*, Rev. XXI. 2, 3.

Nor was all this proper only to those times, when Christianity was first planted in the world; but we have still visible assurances of his gracious presence among us, and of his dear love to us: And that is, in the holy Sacrament of our Lords Body and Blood; where he really and indeed makes himself present to all the faithful, and is in the midst of them. 'There 'he calls unto us, and says, See the love I bear to you. Behold 'the tokens of my everlasting remembrance of you. Believe it, 'I am with you always to the end of the world. I assure you 'hereby, that my Body and Blood shall preserve you to eternal 'life: *Because I live, ye shall live also.*

And though you may imagine this to be a priviledge common to all Christians; yet, if the matter be well considered, it will appear that we have a peculiar Claim to this honour of being a people nigh unto him; or may, at least, in a double regard challenge a special interest in his favour, above all those who endeavour wholly to ingross and limit it to themselves.

First, In that we have the blessed Sacrament of his Body and Blood more entirely and purely administred unto us. Whereby we are assured he is there present among us; when-as they that depend upon the intention of their Priests, can have no certainty of so great a blessing. We have him presented to us according to his own Institution, and therefore cannot reasonably doubt of receiving there all the fruits of his dying love: Whereas they that glory most in his favour, have an imperfect representation of him, a lame and defective ministration of that Divine Grace, which he there communicates to his people.

2. We believe also and are sure, that our Lord is so nigh us,

that we may immediately addreſs our ſelves to him, and be confident of finding acceſs, though we take no Saints or Angels in our way to his bleſſed preſence. We need none to intercede with him for us; like thoſe of the Church of *Rome*, who beg the aſſiſtance of this or that Saint, (eſpecially of the bleſſed Virgin his Mother) to introduce them into his favour, and to recommend them and their ſuits to him. Which manifeſtly ſuppoſes him at a diſtance, and not to be nigh to ſuch Supplicants; who depend upon I know not how many men and women, whom they ſuppoſe to be great Favourites in the Court of Heaven, and whoſe Mediation they muſt uſe, before they can approach him.

This one thing alone is ſufficient to entitle us to this priviledge of being a People nigh unto the Lord, and having him in the midſt of us, above all thoſe Churches of that Communion. It is no fanſie but a real Truth; that we ſtand in a nearer Relation to him, and may be confident of his favour, more than they can be, who dare not go to him but by the interceſſion of others, whom they deſire to procure them acceptance with him. Which very thing alſo is ſuch an Offence to him, that I am confident it ſets them ſtill at a greater diſtance from him. For it is an imitation of that Worſhip which God abhorred ſo much in the Heathen world, that he ſent his Son on purpoſe to deſtroy it; and to bring them to the acknowledgment of this truth, that *there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Chriſt Jeſus.*

This Truth, bleſſed be God, we have received, and hold, as it hath been taught us by his holy Apoſtle St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* II. 4, 5. And by virtue of this, our glory ought to be great in his Salvation, and we ſhould triumph in his praiſe, ſaying, *What Nation is there ſo great, who hath God ſo nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is, in all things that we call upon him for?* We may lawfully look upon our ſelves (and moſt thankfully acknowledge it) as having the moſt High in the midſt of us after a peculiar manner; to bleſs, ſave and deliver us; in one word, to be our God and ſingular Benefactor. Which as it is the greateſt glory, ſo it was ever accounted the greateſt ſafety and ſecurity

(*Zach.*

(*Zach.* II. 5.) For *if God be for us*, as the Apostle speaks, *who can be against us*? We need not care, that is, who opposes us; nor fear what man can do unto us: But though all Nations should compass us about (as the Psalmist speaks, *Psal.* CXVIII. 10, *&c.*) we might say with the same courage and resolution that he doth (could we but be assured that God is with us) In the Name of the Lord will we destroy them. *They compass us about, yea they compass us about, but in the Name of the Lord will we destroy them. They compass us about like Bees, but they shall be quenched as the fire of thorns; for in the name of the Lord will we destroy them. They may thrust sore at us, that we may fall; but the Lord will help us. The right hand of the Lord shall be exalted, the right hand of the Lord shall do valiantly. We shall not dye but live, and declare the works of the Lord.*

This is such a satisfaction that it is a wonder we are not all more solicitous to secure the Divine presence with us, whereby we might live not only safely but confidently, without those fears and dreadful apprehensions that are apt to possess and terrifie us. Which would all vanish, could we but rationally hope that we abide *under the shadow of the Almighty*, and could *say of the LORD, he is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in him will* I *trust. Surely he shall hide me from the Counsel of the wicked, and from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity.* There is not a Man of us, one would think, but would put away all other fears, and dread this alone, lest God should not be with us; did we not presume too much of his favour, and vainly hope for his continued protection, though we be so negligent, as to remain utterly insensible of what he hath done for us, and to take no care to behave our selves worthily as becomes those who have the honour to be so nearly related to him.

II. III.

Let me therefore briefly awaken you, as I propounded in the *Second* place, to a due use of Gods singular grace to you: by representing how far the extraordinary presence of God among a people, will be from exempting them from the severest punishments, if they prove ungrateful and disobedient to him. There is so little reason for any presumption of such immunity,

we may rather justly expect, as I said in the *third* thing I propounded to your consideration, (which for brevities sake I shall joyn with this) that he should punish them sorely, nay utterly forsake them, if they will not be reformed by those punishments.

The *Israelites* are a woful example of this: who fancied indeed strongly that God was tyed to them so fast by his promises, that they were in no danger to lose him, though they took no care to keep him with them; but found their error to their cost, and paid dearly for it; throughout all generations. When he first manifested himself to them, at their coming out of *Ægypt* into the Wilderness, you know how many of their carcases fell there; till they were all consumed but two men, who were the only persons that followed God fully. The cloud which you heard *stood over them*, as a shelter to them while they were obedient to his word, would defend them no longer when they rebelled against him; but poured down fiery indignation upon them, and destroyed them. From that Lord who was in the midst of them, from that dwelling place which they had built for him, out of the house of his glory in which they trusted, there came forth several sorts of sore judgments and smote down the choicest of them. For that, without all doubt, is the propriety of such phrases as that in *Numb.* XVI. 46. *Wrath is gone out from the LORD, the plague is begun.* From the glory of the Lord, *i. e.* which appeared then to all the congregation at the door of the Tabernacle (*v.* 19. 42.) there issued out the tokens of his divine displeasure in a noisome pestilence: by which and other such-like punishments, *Their dayes did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.* For he who had been so kind to them, was so incensed by their repeated rebellions, that he had sworn a little before *Numb.* XIV. 22, 23. That they *who had seen his glory and his Miracles, should not see the land which he promised to their Fathers; surely,* saith he, there shall not *any of them that provoked me see it.*

And they that did, when they turned their backs, and dealt deceitfully like their Fathers, provoking him to anger with their high places, &c. felt the same severe strokes of his just indignation. For *when God heard this,* saith the Psalmist, *He*

was

was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: *So that he forsook the Tabernacle of* Shiloh (which was the first place where the Ark of his presence fixed after they came to *Canaan*) *the Tent which he placed among men: and delivered his strength into captivity, and his Glory into the enemies hand, Psal.* LXXVIII. 59, 60, 61.

And as he did to *Shiloh*, so he threatned, for the same reason, to do to *Jerusalem*; where he afterward chose to dwell, in the famous Temple which *Solomon* built for him. So we read very often in this Prophecy of *Jer.* VII. 12. &c. *Go now unto my place which was in* Shiloh, *where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people* Israel. *And now because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord*, &c. *therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, as I have done to* Shiloh; *and I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast all your Brethren the whole seed of* Ephraim. Which he repeats again, *ch.* XXVI. 4, 5, 6. And at last fulfilled the curse which he there threatens in so terrible a manner, that, as *Jeremy* relates in his Book of *Lamentations*, all that passed by clapt their hands, and hissed, and wagged their heads at *Jerusalem*: For he cast off his Altar, and abhorred his Sanctuary: He gave up the VValls of her Palaces into the Enemies hands; and made her Inhabitants as the off-scouring and refuse in the midst of the People.

But I will not spend the time in relating things so well known: But only remember you how he who appeared to them *face to face*, as I have shewed (*i. e.* in an open and friendly manner) told them at that very time when he was so gracious to them, that if they despised his Statutes and refused to observe his Laws, he would *set his face against them, Levit.* XXVI. 15, 17. In that very face which shone upon them so brightly, they could see nothing but frowns and the saddest tokens of his high displeasure, when they set at nought his Counsels, and would not be ruled by his will, but followed their own foolish lusts and vain imaginations. He turned then to be their Enemy, and was so far from sparing them, because they were called by his Name, that he verified to the full those words of *Amos* III. 2. *You only have I known of all the Families of the earth: therefore*

therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities. And there was very great reason for it; as I had better shew you some other time, than hinder my self now in that which I mainly intend, and you, I believe, expect. For you are convinced, I suppose, that the Lord was *in the midst of them*, not meerly as a Benefactor, but as a Law-giver and their Judge: And that if they offended him by strange VVorship, and contempt of all the rest of his Precepts, he stood engaged in honour to depart from such a rebellious people. By whose Example and your own sad Experience, you are sufficiently taught, I should think, not to presume of the continuance of Gods gracious presence with us in this Church and Kingdom, but rather expect to be abandon'd by him; if we take not some better course, than we have done, to prevent a judgment, which we have most justly deserved.

IV.

VVhat that course is I know you would gladly be informed: and therefore I shall spend the rest of the time in the last thing I propounded; to direct you how to pray to God with such prevailing Supplications, for the continuance of his mercies to us, that we may feel our hearts revived by a comfortable hope, that he will not leave us. Fot as yet he is in the midst of us, and we are called by his Name; and therefore ought not to despair of this blessing, but only sue unto him the more importunately for it, saying, *Lord forsake us not*: That is, withdraw not thy Divine Protection from us; deliver us not over to the will of our Enemies; deprive us not of thy holy Gospel, and thy blessed Sacraments; nor suffer that light which hath so long shone among us to be put out or obscured.

1. For these blessings we must pray, *first*, with great *fervency and earnestness* of spirit. For cold and listless desires will do nothing; especially in a case of such great danger. VVhich should stir us up (as all dangers when we apprehend them are wont to do) *to cry mightily to God*; as the King of *Nineveh* ordained, when he heard there was a Decree of Heaven gone out against them for their destruction, *Jonah* III. 8. Every soul of us should cry mightily to him *in secret*, where no body hears us

us but only God: and *in our Families* (a thing too much slighted) beseeching him to be a guard to us: and in the *Publick Prayers* (which you should frequent as much as is possible) crying unto the Lord at all times, as the poor distressed Mariners in *Jonah* did, and saying; *We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish.* Nay, in such a dangerous time as this, it behoves every man, who knows any of his Neighbours or Familiars to be negligent in this Duty, to awake him as the Shipmaster did *Jonah* in the midst of that dreadful Storm, saying, *What meanest thou, O sleeper, arise, call upon thy God; if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not, Jon.* I. 6. And it concerns us all to mind more seriously what we say daily in the Publick Prayers, when Priest and People call upon God in these words, *O God, make speed to save us; O Lord, make haste to help us.* For there was never more need of that passionate importunity; which we should use at home too, saying, *O God be not far from us: O our God, make haste for our help. We are poor and needy, make haste unto us, O God: thou art our help and our deliverer; O Lord make no tarrying.*

2. And as we ought to pray with great *earnestness*, so with great *humility*, and deep sense of our own unworthiness to find acceptance with God, and obtain the favour of him which we desire. Our souls must lye as low before him as our bodies; and we must sorrowfully acknowledge that we deserve to be utterly abandoned by him, whom we have most shamefully forsaken, and highly provoked to cast off, and let us perish in our iniquities. So *Jeremiah* teaches us in this Chapter, *v.* 20. and we cannot address our selves unto him in better words, *We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our Fathers: for we have sinned against thee.* The remembrance of these ought to be very grievous to us, and the burden of them intolerable. VVhich if we feel sensibly, it will dispose us to cry to God with the greater fervency and frequency; and to beseech him the more earnestly to spare us, saying as *Baruch* a great Friend of *Jeremiah* teaches us, III. 1, 2. *O Almighty Lord, the soul in anguish, the troubled spirit cryeth to thee. Hear, O Lord, and have mercy, for thou art merciful; have pity upon us,*

for

for we have ſinned againſt thee. And if he do condeſcend to our requeſt, we ſhall the more magnifie his mercy, and his clemency will be the more admirable in our eyes; when we have been made thoroughly ſenſible how little we deſerved it, nay how juſtly we had incurred his ſevereſt diſpleaſure.

3. The ſenſe alſo of our ill deſervings, will help another way to make our Prayers effectual, becauſe it will move us wholly to depend upon God for our deliverance. That's a *third* thing neceſſary to make our ſupplications prevalent. We muſt in this humble manner apply our ſelves to God, and (quitting all confidence in any thing that we can do, even in our Prayers) deſire him to ſave us merely for his own ſake; there being nothing in our ſelves to move him to any thing, but only diſpleaſure againſt us. This *Jeremiah* alſo teaches us in the next words to thoſe now mentioned, *v.* 21. *Do not abhor us* (though we and our Fathers have been great ſinners, yet) do not abhor us, *for thy Names ſake, do not diſgrace the Throne of thy glory.* Which argument he uſes alſo a little before my Text, *v.* 7. *O Lord, though our iniquities teſtifie againſt us, do thou it for thy Names ſake.* A moſt excellent Form for us to imitate; who may and ought to ſay, as it there follows, *Our backſlidings have been many, we have ſinned againſt thee*; 'O thou hope of *Iſ-*'*rael*, the Saviour thereof in the time *of trouble*, we have pro-'voked thee to reſolve that thou wilt ſave and deliver us no 'more: but do it for thy Names ſake, do it for thy Truths 'ſake: diſgrace not thy holy Religion here eſtabliſhed among 'us: though we be wicked, that is pure; though we deſerve 'to be deſerted, that is worthy of thy defence and protection. 'And may we take the boldneſs to add (as thy Servants here-'tofore have done) thou haſt many holy devout Worſhippers 'among us, for whoſe ſake we beſeech thee to do it. *O look not* '*upon the ſinners of thy people; but on them which ſerve thee in* '*truth*, 2 *Eſdras* III. 28. 31. 34. and VIII. 26. Are their deeds any better *who inhabit* Babylon, *that they ſhould therefore have the dominion over* Sion? *Weigh thou our wickedneſs now in the ballance, and theirs alſo that dwell in the world: and ſo ſhall thy Name be found no where, as it is in our* Iſrael. *Pſal.* CXV. 1. *Not*

unto

unto us therefore, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give glory: for thy mercy and thy truth sake. Remember not the iniquities of our Forefathers, but think upon thy Power and thy Name now at this time. For thou art the Lord our God, and thee, O Lord, will we praise; and for this cause hast thou put thy fear in our hearts, to the intent that we should call upon thee.

These last are the words of *Baruch* III. 5, 6. who imitates, you see, his Friend *Jeremiah*, as they all do the Psalmist, with whose words I shall conclude this particular LXXIX. 8, *&c. O remember not against us former iniquities, let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation for the glory of thy Name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy Names sake. Wherefore should they say, where is now their God? Let him be known among them in our sight, by the revenging of the blood of thy Servants which hath been shed.*

That's the *third* thing: Let us profess our sole dependence on him, and expectation meerly from his goodness and for his glory; disclaiming all confidence in our selves, and (let me add) in man too; that is, in all humane help and Counsels. For which end let me recommend that Form of Prayer to you, for perpetual use, *Psal.* LX. 11. *Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man.* I say perpetually,

4. For we must pray to God in this manner with perseverance; *continuing instant in Prayer*, as the Apostle speaks, *Rom.* XII. 12. *praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto, with all perseverance*, *Ephes.* VI. 18. That is, we must not be discouraged if we obtain not our suits presently, but pray still with *all prayer*, secret, private, publick; and *in the Spirit*, with earnestness and fervour; *watching thereunto*; *i. e.* borrowing some time from our sleep, or our business, rather than neglect this Duty of fervent prayer; resolving not to be weary, but with *all perseverance*, to cry mightily to him till he have mercy upon us.

This is our Saviours Doctrine, *Luke* XVIII. 1. where he spake a Parable to this end, *that men ought always to pray and not faint*, or grow weary. For if, as he shews, an unjust and im-

pious Judge may be moved by importunity to do a poor Widow right, shall we think *that God will not avenge his Elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily*, v. 7, 8. And this was the course that *Jeremy* here resolved to take, in their great distress for want of Rain, *ver. last* of this Chapter, *Can any of the vanities of the Gentiles give Rain, or the Heaven give showers? Art not thou he, O Lord our God? therefore will we wait upon thee.* And so truly must we; praying in the Psalmists words, *Psal.* CXXIII. 2, 3, 4. *Behold, as the Eyes of Servants look unto the hand of their Masters, and as the Eyes of a Maiden unto the hand of her Mistress: So our Eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.*

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.

Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease: and with the contempt of the proud.

Let every soul here present put up, at least, this short petition to God day by day for this Church and Kingdom; besides those he makes for himself and Family. And as often as you can, set apart some time for more solemn importuning of his mercy towards us.

5. And let us be sure to take care of one thing more, without which all this labour will be lost, *viz. to make all our supplications with hearty resolutions, to reform every thing that we know to be amiss in our hearts and lives.*

This was the course to which the King of *Nineveh* directed his People by his Proclamation; requiring all (in the place I mentioned before) high and low to fast, and put on Sackcloth, *and cry mightily unto God: yea let them turn every one from his evil way* (saith the Royal Edict) *and from the violence that is in their hands: Who can tell if God will repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?* A Heathen Prince, you see, had more sense than to hope he should prevail, meerly by fasting, humiliation, and earnest cryes to God for mercy: And therefore it would be a burning shame, as they speak, if we who are better instructed should trust to these things alone, without

without a ſincere and thorough repentance and amendment of life.

This was the unpardonable ſtupidity of the *Jews* (whom I hope you will no longer imitate) that when they had faſted, and cryed to God, and implored the interceſſion of the Prophet alſo, who here beſeeches God not to leave them; they imagined the buſineſs was done, and took no further care to bring forth the fruits that God expects from Penitents. For which reaſon God bids *Jeremiah* hold his peace, and ſay no more in the behalf of ſuch a naughty Generation, as it follows immediately after my Text, *v.* 10, 11, 12. *Thus ſaith the Lord unto this people, thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet: therefore the Lord will not accept them, &c.* Read the reſt, and you will ſee his reſolution was this; that if they intended no more than they had done, neither their cries nor *Jeremy*'s ſhould obtain his mercy, though they were never ſo importunate. The main thing was ſtill wanting, which is this I am preſſing upon you, *moſt humble addreſſes to God with hearts fully purpoſed to amend.* This and this alone will do the buſineſs, and undoubtedly prevail; though the condition of a Nation ſeem hopeleſs. For it is plain, *Jeremiah* doth not ceaſe to pray for his people, as you may read here, *v.* 19, 20, 21. but notwithſtanding the prohibition now mentioned in the 11. *v.* continues to be their Interceſſor with God. Which is a ſign that he did not underſtand it as if he were abſolutely forbidden to pray for them; but only in caſe they remained impenitent. Let them but forſake their ſins and love no longer to wander in forbidden paths, and he was confident God would hear his Prayers and not depart from them.

To this remedy therefore we muſt fly, as the chiefeſt of all; if we would have Gods gracious preſence ſtill continue among us: and not imagine we are ſafe, becauſe we have kept a ſolemn day of faſting and prayer, and reſolve, perhaps, to continue inſtant in prayer when this day is done. We have been told often enough there is ſome thing more which God requires of us, and cannot be ignorant that not all prayers, not all importunate prayers, but the effectual fervent prayers of a righteous

Man, avail very much. Which makes it the more ſtrange that of all things we cannot be perſwaded to becom truly righteous and good men; but are averſe to nothing ſo much as to that, which alone can do us any good. It is a ſad thing that we will ſtill ſplit upon the ſame rock; where we ſee ſo many wracks before us. And our condition, let me tell you, will be the ſadder; becauſe we have no excuſe left us if we will not beware, and in time make uſe of this effectual remedy, which hath been ſo long preſcribed us. We are in a far worſe condition than the ſtupid *Jews*, if we ſtill neglect ſo powerful a means of our deliverance.

For mark, I beſeech you, how much *Jeremy* had to plead for his Country-men: Which God indeed would not allow for a ſufficient reaſon to free them from blame, and yet there is no ſuch thing to be alledged in our behalf. You read *v.* 13. how *Jeremy* ſighed and ſaid, *Ah Lord God, behold the Prophets ſay unto them, ye ſhall not ſee the ſword, neither ſhall ye have famine; but I will give you aſſured peace in this place.* As much as to ſay, this people are to be pitied, for though they are bad: alas for them! they are very bad; yet this is not ſo much their fault, as the fault of their Prophets, who have aſſured them they are not in ſuch danger as I tell them, and that none of the judgments I have threatned, ſhall come upon them. This he thought might at leaſt alleviate their guilt; that they were cheated and abuſed by their guides, who ſoothed them up, and dandled them in their ſins.

But God would not admit of this Apology; but declares that they and their Prophets ſhould all periſh together. *v.* 14, 15, 16. *Then the Lord ſaid unto me* (this was the reply) *the Prophets propheſy lyes in my name, I ſent them not, neither have I commanded them*, &c. *Therefore, thus ſaith the Lord concerning thoſe Prophets which ſay, Sword and Famine ſhall not be in the land, by Sword and by Famine ſhall thoſe Prophets be conſumed. And the people to whom they prophecy, ſhall be caſt out in the ſtreets of* Jeruſalem *becauſe of the famine and the ſword*, &c. For the people ought not to have believed thoſe that flattered them in their vices; which natural reaſon, without the help of Prophecy, teaches us to be pernicious. And they ought not to have given

given up themſelves ſo eaſily, to beileve thoſe who brought no ſufficient teſtimonials along with them, to convince ſerious minds that they were ſent by God to them. It was their love to wickedneſs, which made them ſo readily aſſent to lyers, and reſign up their faith to bold deceivers; who preached only the dreams of their own deceitful hearts.

What a caſe are we in then, if we do not reform, in whoſe behalf, there is not a ſyllable of this (though alas! but a feeble refuge) that can be pretended to diminiſh our crimes? There is not one of the Miniſters of God among us, that hath preached peace unto us. No, they have ſaid it over and over again with one voice, that God is exceeding angry with us; and that he is not yet reconciled, after ſo many ſore judgments as he hath ſent upon us; and that there is no way to atone him but by unfeigned repentance; and that our repentance is but feigned and inſincere, without amendment of life. They have caution'd the Nation alſo againſt all falſe Prophets, as we may call them; particularly againſt the *Romiſh* deceivers, who would lull you aſleep, and promiſe no body knows what golden days, if we would but return into the boſome of their Church. They have diſcovered likewiſe all the impoſtures of mens own naughty hearts, and have alarm'd the whole Kingdom, and bid them beware of danger; and uprightly ſhown the way to eſcape it. And therefore if God would not ſpare ſuch a poor, deceived, hoodwinkt, beſotted people as the *Iſraelites*, who were led blindfold into deſtruction, becauſe they loved to be deceived: How can we think he will ſpare us, who are faithfully admoniſhed, and not in the leaſt bolſtered up in our wickedneſs, if when we ſee ruine juſt before our eyes, we will not go out of our way to avoid it? You cannot name any one of this Church, that hath confidently propheſied of glorious times. Nor above one impious Writer of any note (and he not pretending to the Miniſtry) that hath laid down Principles to incourage men in wickedneſs and irreligion. And therefore if we will notwithſtanding run on in our evil courſes, it is a ſign we have no heart to any thing elſe; but that this is our inclination, nay our reſolution; and that we being unreformable muſt periſh, becauſe we

have

have no mind to be saved in Gods way, but to hurry on to destruction in our own.

Never any Nation perhaps perished, if we must be undone, against so much Reason, against such plain warnings, against so many mercies to invite us to do better, and so many judgments to deter us from our evil ways; against so many convincing instructions, clear and rational arguments, solid confutations, not only of all leud and atheistical Principles, but of Popery and of all Fanatical Doctrines. There can be nothing therefore pleaded in our behalf, but we must be left, as the man without a Wedding Garment, perfectly speechless. A sad and most wretched condition! Sad, because we shall be extremely miserable: and sad, because we shall not be able to say why we were so frantick, as against so many restraints to cast our selves into such miseries.

Which I beseech you let every one of us, for our parts, endeavour to prevent by timely repentance, never to be repented of: For that's the thing, I have shewn you, still wanting for our preservation. And I must tell you further in the last place,

6. That, as the case now stands, it is not an ordinary Repentance and Reformation that will serve the turn. We are gone too far, I doubt, towards ruine, to be delivered without some extraordinary endeavours to put a stop to it: and therefore I must say to you, for a conclusion of all, as our Lord Christ doth to the luke warm Church of *Laodicea*, *Rev.* III. 19. *Be zealous therefore, and repent.* Repentance is not sufficient for the recovery of a Church, when there is a great Apostacy and defection in Faith and in Manners; but we must join zeal with it, which is a pious warmth in our affections for all that is good and vertuous; and that will certainly do the business. We need not fear then the most desperate Enemies; no, not our sins: but look upon all the Judgments God hath sent upon us, as tokens of his love to us, if they awaken us to zealous repentance. For so our Saviour there incourages us to hope, in the words foregoing: *As many as I love, I rebuke & chasten; be zealous therefore and repent.* There would be some hope of us, if we could but see that indifferency, that chilness, nay deadness

deadneſs which is in too many ſpirits, turn'd into a warm, nay burning zeal both in the Service of God, and for his Service.

I. Be zealous therefore, *firſt* in your Devotions; of which I have ſpoken ſomething already. But let me again beſeech you to ſtir up your ſelves to make your ſupplications to God, with more inflamed affection, for the King, for the Parliament, for the Biſhops and Paſtors of the Flock of Chriſt; for the Magiſtrates, for one another; that all and every of theſe in their ſeveral places may attend their duty, and perform it faithfully and zealouſly. Inſtead of finding fault, as the manner is, with this and the other perſon, whoſe actions do not pleaſe us, let us fall upon our Knees, and with fervent prayers intreat the Divine Majeſty, that he will bend their hearts to ſtudy to do thoſe things which are pleaſing and acceptable in his ſight; and to do them with all their might, remembring there is no work nor device in the Grave whither they are going.

We tell God every day in the Collect for our Soveraign Lord the King, that we *moſt heartily* beſeech him, *he may alway incline to Gods will, and walk in his way.* O that there were indeed ſuch a heart in us, as *Moſes* ſpeaks; and that we would conſtantly with more fervour than ever, put up that Petition for his Majeſty! Beſeeching him alſo by whom Kings reign, to be his defender and keeper, and not to ſuffer any of the Sons of violence to approach to do him hurt.

With the like ardent zeal ſhould we daily ſay the following Prayer for the Queen, his Royal Highneſs, and all the Royal Family, that *he would endue them with his holy Spirit, and enrich them with his heavenly grace.* Of which things did we make a greater conſcience, and were not careleſs and frozen in our Devotions, we might hope to obtain that which we ſo much deſire, a clearer diſcovery of the ſnares our Enemies have laid for us.

For which I beſeech you to pray with all the ardour that you are able to raiſe up in your hearts, that God would bring to light ſtill more and more the hidden works of darkneſs. Be importunate with him who ſees into the greateſt ſecrets, to lay bare to the very bottom all the wicked contrivances that are againſt us.

Call

Call upon him likewiſe with the ſame fervour, that he would *endue his Miniſters with righteouſneſs*, and inſpire them with ſuch courage that they may behave themſelves like men, who have not received *the ſpirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a ſound mind.*

Pray alſo that he would raiſe up the Spirits of thoſe who are aſſembled in the High Court of Parliament, to conſult for our good, unto the loftieſt pitch of Chriſtian reſolution, wiſdom, and integrity. Beſeech him to ſend among them a Spirit of might and power, whereby they may act ſo reſolutely and worthily, that if any be falſe they may be daunted, if any be faint-hearted they may be incouraged.

Finally pray that all the Lords people, may *Watch, and ſtand faſt in the faith, quit themſelves like men, be ſtrong; and do all their things in charity; loving one another with a pure heart fervently*, 1 *Cor.* XVI. 13, 14. 1 *Pet.* I. 22.

II. But we muſt not content our ſelves meerly with this zeal in our devotions; we muſt be *zealous alſo of good works*, *Tit.* II. *ult.* In order to this (which is all, the time will now give me leave to mention) every ſoul of us muſt beſtir himſelf to give a ſevere check to all vitious affections and actions, and to root them out of himſelf, and his family, and whereſoever he hath any power: looking upon theſe as the greateſt Traitors in the Nation. And ſince true zeal will always begin at home, where we have moſt power to reform, let every man ſearch out with great care, and caſt out with great indignation, whatſoever he finds in himſelf that is contrary to his Religion: having a holy jealouſie over himſelf leſt any thing ſhould eſcape his ſtricteſt examination. For why ſhould we think that God will preſerve our Religion, and maintain it againſt thoſe that ſeek to deſtroy it; if we make no other uſe of it, but only to fill us with vain confidences of his love and favour, while we continue in our impurities? If we have any love to it, any value for it, let it have its due effects upon us; by purging us from thoſe things which diſparage it: *That we may be veſſels of honour, ſanctified and meet for the Maſters uſe, and prepared unto every good work*, 2 *Tim.* II. 21. And in what work can they that have authority better imploy them-

themſelves, than in ſetting themſelves to chaſtiſe evil doers; to reform all abuſes in the places where they live; to diſcover all workers of iniquity, and to purſue them, when they are diſcovered with a juſt indignation, and bring them to condign puniſhment? They are very *uſeleſs* if they neglect this, and have little love to their *Maſter* and his Religion: which had ſuch power over mens hearts heretofore, that even after they had *left their firſt love* and declined in their affection to Chriſtianity, they had ſo much zeal remaining as not to be able *to bear them which were evil.* It is our Saviours Character of the Church of *Epheſus*, *Rev.* II. 2, 4. among whoſe works (though ſhort of what they did at firſt *v.* 5.) he reckons this for one, and commends them for *trying them which ſaid they were Apoſtles and were not, and for finding them to be liars.*

III. Which will lead me to the laſt thing I am to preſs upon you; and that is, to be zealous for the defence of our Religion. Godly zeal I ſuppoſe you all know, is nothing elſe but the affection of love to God raiſed to the pitch of fervency; which will not let us endure any hurt or contempt ſhould be offer'd to that which he loves, if we can remedy it. Now what doth he love more than true Religion? which the purer it is, the dearer without all doubt it is to him that hates all iniquity. And where I beſeech you can you find any Religion, which in this regard may be compared with that which is by Law here eſtabliſhed? Which deſerves therefore all the zeal you can expreſs for its preſervation; and at this time calls for all the zeal that it deſerves. For it is loſt, in all likelihood, without every mans zeal in his place to ſave it. We are undone, if we have not a heat, activity, and courage proportionable to theirs that ſeek to deſtroy it.

And is it not a ſhame, that falſe Religion ſhould make men more buſie and active, more bold and undaunted, than true Religion doth thoſe who have ſo long profeſſed it, and been inſtructed in the worth and excellency of it? Or do we expect to have it preſerved without ſo much ado? Are we ſuch Fools as to imagine, that if we defend our ſelves weakly, faintly, and timorouſly, when they aſſault us not only reſolutely but bold-

ly and furiously, we shall get the Victory? No; the Magistrates must do all that is in their power, to execute his Majesties Command for the finding out and expelling those that oppose it. And they that are not Magistrates, must give them their assistance, and quicken those that are. Call upon all your Acquaintance who have any power or interest, to be honest and upright; to preserve their integrity, and not be tempted by any thing in this world to betray their Religion. And tell them it is not enough to be upright, but they must be diligent and zealous: because now is the time for every man to shew himself, and to do all that lawfully he may, for the honour and safety of his Religion. There are no other bounds that I know of, which we are to set to our zeal for our Religion, but only this; that we do nothing contrary to it. Whatsoever it allows, it now requires; that we may not lose it. We must not suffer our zeal to be damped by politick considerations, respect to our private interest, and desire to please Men: but waving all these, take care only that others be not wronged by it, while we suffer, perhaps, very much in our own concerns.

For he knows nothing of the nature of holy zeal, who doth not feel it transport him, to act beyond himself; and to make him quite forget his own private concerns, which he thinks of no further, than as they are included in the publique good. There can be no other meaning of that which the Apostles apply to our Saviour [*The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up, Joh.* II. 17.] than this; that he regarded not his own particular interest, nor minded what he was likely to suffer, but all thoughts of it were swallowed up in his zeal to serve God. Who will not be served indeed by our private passions and evil affections; but doth expect that we should not consult with the wisdom of this World, which is for suffering nothing, but avoiding all that may hurt and prejudice us, though God may be thereby very much honoured. And therefore his wisdom (of which we ought to take counsel) bids us forget the damage we may suffer, and lay aside all thoughts of our selves; so we may but promote his glory. When we have any hope of that, we must hearken to no other advice but that of the Apostle, *Rom.* XII. 11. *Not slothful*

in

in buſineſs: but fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord. We would be glad perhaps, to follow the other reading of the laſt part of that Verſe, *ſerving the time*; but not in the right ſenſe: ſerving the time, by ſerving the Lord faithfully in our ſeveral ſtations.

This he expects from us; this our Religion and all good men expect from us; that at this time, when the *Zealots* of the *Romiſh* Church are ſo outragiouſly ſet to deſtroy us, we ſhould pluck up our ſpirits, as the phraſe is, and imitate or rather excel them; not in that cut-throat zeal (God forbid) which made the *Jewiſh* Nation, as it doth them, ſo infamous; but in a juſt indignation againſt ſuch barbarous perſons and practiſes, and in a zealous reſolution always burning in our breaſts, to defend our Religion, the beſt we can, againſt their attempts. I am bold to ſpeak in this manner, without any undue tranſport, becauſe I find God himſelf expreſſing his zealous affection for the defence of his Church in far higher terms than theſe, *Zach.* VIII. 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, I was jealous for* Zion *with great jealouſie; and I was jealous for her with great fury.*

Do not you then liſten to any motion which may be made to you, I will not ſay to leave your Religion, but to be remiſs and not ſo zealous for it. Think what a diſhonour it will be to you, and how it will endanger it: if when ſo many *bend their tongues like their bow for lies*, you ſhould not be *valiant for the truth:* Which was the charge that *Jeremy* (*ch.* IX. 3.) brought againſt *Jeruſalem*, but I hope will never be your guilt; who have ſuch a Religion to defend, as will not let you be Cowards, if you underſtand the difference between it and that which oppoſes it. Conſider it, I beſeech you, beforehand, that if any body ſhould attacque you with Arguments to deſert it, you may be *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, in nothing terrified by your adverſaries*, when they tell you Popery will prevail notwithſtanding all our endeavours to keep it out. Reſolve it ſhall never prevail over your ſouls, whatſoever may become of your bodies: But as you now pray ſolemnly *God will not leave us*, ſo you will fortifie your ſelves impregnably againſt all

perſwaſions to leave him, by quitting your Religion.

Do not ſo much as ſtoop to hearken to any ſuch ſeducement; but conſidering, as I ſaid, well beforehand what it is you muſt leave, and for what (if you forſake the Communion of this Church) *ſtand faſt in one ſpirit, with one mind* (in perfect unity) *ſtriving together for the Faith of the Goſpel.* So I may truly call our Religion here eſtabliſhed; from which if you ſhould 'depart, you leave the old way of ſerving God for new inven-'tions. For you forſake a Religion wherein God is purely 'worſhipped, for one that joins Saints and Angels with him. 'You forſake a Church that prays to God alone, through the 'interceſſion of Chriſt Jeſus, for one that prays to Saints in 'the very ſame form of words wherein they pray to him. 'You leave the holy Scriptures, to follow uncertain Traditions; 'and part with your Bibles, for Legends and fabulous Stories. 'You go away from Prayers and Hymns you underſtand, to a 'Service in an Unknown Tongue. Inſtead of the whole Sa-'crament you muſt be content with half; or rather with none 'at all. For it is certain, where the Blood of Chriſt is not im-'parted to you as *ſhed*, or poured out of the Body (as it is not 'in the *Roman* Church) it is not communicated at all, and the 'people have no fellowſhip with Chriſt in his death, being de-'prived of his blood, which was *ſhed for the remiſſion of ſins.*

'Inſtead of ſure and certain comfort, you muſt rely in all holy 'Offices upon meer uncertainties: for if the Prieſts intention 'be wanting (of which none can be ſure) there is no Baptiſm, 'no Communion, no Orders, no Prieſthood, no Church. And 'conſequently you leave the worſhipping of Chriſt, for a Wor-'ſhip, which, for any thing you can know, may be meer Idola-'try. For in caſe there be no Tranſubſtantiation, but the Bread 'and Wine ſtill remain after the Conſecration, they them-'ſelves have acknowledged it is Idolatry to worſhip them. Now 'we are ſure there is no Tranſubſtantiation, and it is impoſſi-'ble that they ſhould be ſure there is; (even according to their 'own principles, becauſe they can never be ſure the Prieſt actu-'ally intends to do what Chriſt commanded, and then nothing 'is done) and therefore they can never be ſure that they are not 'Idolaters.

'If

'If you join with those of *Rome*, all the ancient Councils 'must signifie nothing with you, in comparison with one late 'Conventicle; which was no better than a Conspiracy of a 'few men against the Church of Christ. You must quit a 'Church which teaches you to be subject to the King as Su- 'preme, for one that teaches you to be subject in the first place 'to the Pope. Exchange a Church that requires of all its 'Members the strictest obedience to their Governour, for one 'that at least suffers the most rebellious principles to pass for 'Christian Doctrine; and the most bloody murders to pass for 'Christian, if not meritorious, actions. You must leave a 'Church that bids you look about you, and see that you be in 'the right, for one that would put out your eyes, and bids 'you blindly follow them: A Church that, in St. *Paul*'s words, 'requires you to *prove all things*, for one that requires you to 'renounce your Reason, nay common sense, that you may be- 'lieve the greatest absurdities.

'If you leave the established Religion, you forsake a Church 'whose Service is performed in a plain and grave, a comely and 'decent manner, for one that is burthened with more Ceremo- 'nies by far, than are contained in all the Law of *Moses*. You 'depart from a Church which only seeks the good of your souls 'and the glory of God in all its Ministrations, for one that is 'apparently contrived for enriching the Priests, and for the glo- 'ry of the Pope. You leave a Church which teaches you to 'live piously, or else gives you no hopes of salvation, for one 'that indulges men to live as they list, and yet not utterly pe- 'rish at the last. A Church you abandon that is mild and gen- 'tle to those that are deceived, for the sake of one that prosecutes 'all those who dissent from it with Fire and Faggot, Massacres 'and unheard-of butcheries. Nay, you relinquish a Church 'that is very charitable in her Opinions and Censures, for one 'that damns all those to the pit of Hell, though never so blame- 'less in their lives, and stedfast believers of the three ancient 'Creeds, if they be not of their Communion.

'You leave a Religion which proclaims that *Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled: but Whoremongers and Adulterers*

'*Adulterers God will judge*, for one that ſtrictly forbids her 'Prieſts to marry, but connives at their Fornication. That is, 'you leave a Religion in which you are taught to have the 'greateſt regard to the Commands of Chriſt, for one wherein 'you may more ſafely break many of his Precepts, than one of 'the Laws of the Church. To conclude, you leave a Religion 'which is ſincere, and void of all deceit and fraud, for one 'which cheats men with hallowed Trinkets, (ſuch as *Roſes*, '*Beads*, *Swords*, *Agnus Dei*, and other waxen ware) whereby 'they draw vaſt ſums of money from the ſimple, for meer toys 'and bables.

They that conſider not the caſe may look upon all this as an invective, which in truth is but a bare Narrative: and no more than is neceſſary to be ſaid, our enemies themſelves being Judges, at ſuch a time as this. For they would look upon us, I am confident, as a company of deſpicable wretches, if we ſhould not dare on ſuch an occaſion to ſpeak for our Religion. Which teaches us, after the example of St. *Paul* to be *jealous over you with a godly jealouſie: fearing leſt by any means, as the Serpent beguiled* Eve *through his ſubtilty, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt*, 2 *Cor.* XI. 2, 3. In which you ought to preſerve your ſelves, and not admit of the *Romiſh* mixtures, whereby the ſimple Religion of Chriſt is adulterated; if you have any regard either to your Souls, or your Bodies, or your eſtates, which are all in danger. Be zealous therefore in your Religion, and for your Religion. Show that you mean not to leave it (for that is in effect to leave your reaſon, that you may be rob'd of your faith) nor to leave off your moſt vigorous endeavours to preſerve it.

And truly we have the greateſt cauſe to be thus zealous both in our prayers and in our endeavours, to fortifie our ſelves and one another; to rouſe up our courage, to maintain what God hath ſo long by many wonderful providences maintained and preſerved: becauſe he doth not ſeem to have a mind to leave us, if we will not baſely deſert him and his cauſe.

For mark, I beſeech you, what incouragement he gives us to hope, that notwithſtanding our vile requitals of all his loving-

kindneſs,

kindneſs, we may be delivered, if we will at laſt take ſuch a pious courſe, as I have deſcribed.

Firſt of all, he hath graciouſly heard the Prayers of his faithful people, who have often beſought him, that *he would bring to naught all the evils which the craft and ſubtilty of the devil or man worketh againſt us.* He hath ſtrangely, when we lookt not for it, detected their ſecret Counſels; and thereby delivered our Soveraign (whom God long preſerve) from the deteſtable deſign which was againſt his life. This was the Lords doing alone, and it ought to be marvellous in our eyes; and excite us to do all we can for our own preſervation, ſeeing he hath done ſo much already. *For unleſs the Lord had been our help, our ſouls had quickly dwelt in ſilence,* Pſ. XCIV. 17.

Another incouragement is the happy agreement, hitherto between the two houſes of Parliament: who both are induſtrious to make further diſcoveries of thoſe ungodly devices which are in part come to light, and to provide the beſt means they can think of for our ſafety.

His Majeſties gracious Declaration alſo, that he is *ready to joyn with them in all the wayes and means that may eſtabliſh a firm ſecurity of the Proteſtant Religion as our own hearts can wiſh,* is a further encouragement.

But the greateſt of all is, that God hath done all hitherto for us himſelf, for his *own Names ſake*; notwithſtanding our high provocations. There hath been little of man ſeen in all this buſineſs, or in any of our former deliverances; which have been a ſucceſſion of Miraculous works, for the preſervation of this Church and Kingdom. We cannot ſay that it was the prudence, the diligence, the watchfulneſs of our Councellors, which brought to light the deeds of darkneſs; but Gods infinite mercy alone who toucht the heart of one man to reveal thoſe ſecrets, which, for the preſent, hath daſht their deſigns in pieces. As confident as they were they are faln ſhort of their aim; and the prey is ſnatcht, as it were, out of their very teeth. *They opened their mouth againſt us, they hiſſed, and gnaſht their teeth*; but have not as yet been able to ſay, *we have ſwallowed them up, certainly this is the day that we looked for: we have found it, we*

have

have seen it, *Lam.* 2. 16. No; *Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth:* Which we may very well look upon as a token for good, saying with *David*, *Psal.* XLI. 11. *By this I know that thou favourest me, because my enemy doth not triumph over me.* When they were in so fair a way to it, then to be disappointed of their triumph, is a manifest sign, I think, that God hath a kindness for us. And may incourage us to say when we see them rave, and hear them still brag that the day shall be their own, *Talk no more so exceeding proudly, let not arrogance come forth out of your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. He will keep the feet of his Saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness: for by strength shall no man prevail*, 1 *Sam.* II. 3, 9.

Did we thus religiously depend upon him, and trust in him, I am very confident he would still defeat our enemies; and not suffer them, howsoever they may boast, to triumph over us: even for this very reason because they are so insolent and barbarous. That's a new thing to be considered for our encouragement. The savage cruelty and bloodiness of their designs, against those among whom they live peaceably, and who have been kind as well as gentle to them, is an argument that God abhors them as much as we can do; and that he will confound them, if we do not provoke him to abhor us and cast us off, for our ingratitude and gross negligence in that Religion, which hath been so often most wondrously preserved. We may make the same complaint to God that *David* did, and thereby move him to pity us; that they are not only *our enemies wrongfully*, but *have rendred us evil for good, and hatred for our good will:* which is the character of the worst natures in the world.

It would have been easie for us, were we so disposed as we find them to be, to have destroyed them all long ago: Our Numbers and strength being so vastly greater, that nothing could have restrained us from it, but only this, that our Religion is better. Which may make us hope God will be farther merciful to us; and not let them prevail, who are emboldned by nothing else to attempt to destroy us, but by this alone; that we are taught to be so kind to them as not to destroy them.

If

If *David* made this an argument why God ſhould defend him from thoſe that roſe up againſt him, becauſe they were *gathered together, not for my tranſgreſſion, nor for my ſin, O Lord*, as he ſpeaks, *Pſal.* LIX. 3. We may much more urge the ſame motive, with a little alteration of his words, ſaying, *Deliver us from the workers of iniquity, ſave us from bloody men. For lo, they lie in wait for us; the mighty are gathered together againſt us; not for our tranſgreſſion, nor for our ſin, O Lord* (but quite contrary, becauſe our fear of thee forbids us to deſtroy them) *They run and prepare themſelves without our fault: awake to help us, and behold* the danger wherein we are. *Thou therefore, O Lord God of hoſts, the God of* Iſrael, *awake to viſit them: be not merciful to any wicked tranſgreſſor. Conſume them in wrath, conſume them that they may not be: and let them know that God* (not they) *ruleth here, and unto the ends of the Earth.*

And it is a ſingular comfort ſurely to know and ſtedfaſtly believe, that as the Pſalmiſt ſaith elſewhere (*Pſal.* XCIX. 1. according to the old tranſlation) *The Lord is King, be the people never ſo unpatient; he ſitteth between the* Cherubims (*i. e.* governs the world) *be the earth never ſo unquiet.* Upon him therefore let us depend and commend our ſelves piouſly to his protection, and we need not fear all the power on earth, that they can raiſe againſt us. As for their intereſt in heaven, we are ſure it is very ſmall; *For if the Lord had not been on our ſide, when they roſe up againſt us; then they had ſwallowed us up quick, when they were ſo wrathfully diſpleaſed at us.* They depended it's like very much upon their ſuppoſed intereſt in the Saints: whom they ply hard with their prayers, and it is probable beſought their help very earneſtly upon this occaſion. For I find they have relyed upon them, more than they are willing to confeſs, in former times: particularly when the *Spaniards* invaded us with their *Armada* called *Invincible.* An Image then of the Bleſſed Virgin, famous as they pretend for Miracles both on the Sea and Land, was brought in great pomp from *Del Puig* to the great Church of the City of *Valentia.* And there a Solemn *Litany* was Sung to her upon the 17. of *July* being *Sunday* 1588. part of which I ſhall recite (out of *Ferdinando Texeda*) that you may ſee

how little credit is to be given to them, when they tell you they only desire the Saints to pray for them.

We Sinners beseech thee to hear us, that thou wouldst impetrate true Repentance for us.

We beseech thee to hear us.

That thou wouldst take care to preserve the Apostolick See, and all Ecclesiastical Orders in Holy Religion.

We beseech thee to hear us.

That all Storms allayed thou wouldst conduct the Catholick Fleet of the Catholick King in safety to the desired Haven.

We beseech thee, &c.

That thou wouldst make the Catholick Fleet of the Catholick King victorious over Savage Hereticks.

We beseech thee, &c.

That thou wouldst smite the obstinate Hereticks of England *with fear and trembling.*

We beseech thee to hear us.

I omit the rest, because this is sufficient to show where their great strength lies (as to the other VVorld), which as it failed then, so no doubt it ever will in time to come. For they are instigated to their bloody attempts by another sort of invisible powers, who, if God permit, may give them indeed very great assistance. But the blessed Virgin and the Saints, if they know what is doing here, we are well assured will pray against them, and join with us (without our supplicating their favour) in such humble requests as these,

O God, to whom Vengeance belongeth : O God, to whom Vengeance belongeth, shew thy self.

Lift up thy self, thou Judge of the Earth ; render a reward to the proud.

Lord, how long shall the Wicked, how long shall the Wicked triumph? How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of Iniquity boast themselves, Psal. XCIV. 1, 2, 3, 4.

And

And if I put into your Mouths a whole Psalm appointed to be read this morning (and composed in some such distress as now presses us) with such alterations as may make it applicable to our condition; I am confident I shall neither offend the Saints in Heaven, nor the Saints on Earth.

Psal. LXXXIII.

Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.

For lo, thine Enemies make a tumult; and they that hate thee have lift up the head.

They have taken crafty Counsel against thy People, and consulted against thy hidden ones.

They have said, come, and let us cut them off from being a Church that their Name may be no more in remembrance.

For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee.

We cannot tell their Numbers, and their Combinations; like those of Edom *and* Ishmael, &c.

But do thou unto them as unto the Armada *of which they boasted: and as unto the Gun-powder Conspirators,* &c.

O Our God, make them like a Wheel: as the stubble before the wind.

As the fire burneth the wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire;

So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy Storm.

Fill their faces with shame: that they may seek thy name, O Lord (that great happiness we wish them with all our hearts.)

Let them be confounded and troubled for ever: yea, let them be put to shame, and perish.

That they may know, that thou whose Name alone is JEHOVAH *art the most high over all the earth*

FINIS.

Thomas Stevens

Thomas Stevens.

1676